

INTRINSIC POWER AND SOCIAL ACTION, continued

dominant groups use power to oppress others, those who are oppressed are compelled to seek ways of resisting oppressive situations. Oppressed people who allow themselves to be dominated abuse their power by not taking social action to get rid of oppression. Responsibility for getting rid of oppression lies in the hands of the dominated: In other words, the dominated must use their intrinsic power to remove oppression from society. Failure of the dominated to take social action is as much an abuse of intrinsic power as is the abuse of intrinsic power by the dominant who believe it is their right to oppress others. A concrete example of power intrinsic to both dominant and dominated humans can be seen in the relationship between the buyer and the seller. The seller or proprietor of automobiles needs the buyer in order for him to maintain proprietary dominance. Without the buyer, automobiles will be worthless and worth less. When the buyer realizes there is power in the act of buying, then we begin to understand the dynamics of power broking – both the buyer and the seller have power.

We liberate ourselves through education, in that education enables the dominated to think critically and use intrinsic power to create alternatives to oppressive and exclusionary

Some Comparisons of African and European Cultures

African	European
- Spiritualism	- Materialism
- Harmony with nature	- Mastery over nature
- Organic metaphors	- Mechanistic metaphors
- Expressive movement	- Impulse control
- Interconnectedness	- Separateness
- Affect	- Reason
- Event orientation	- Clock orientation
- Orally based culture	- Print-based culture
- Expressive individualism	- Possessive individualism
- Uniqueness valued	- Sameness valued

Source: Boykin 1988, page 83

activities in society.

One final look at powerbroking takes us to the Mind and how language is used to divert the dominated away from their intrinsic power. Powerbrokers talk of empowering students, of empowering others as if power is a commodity, something to put on, put off, take away and/or return. No one empowers another, one empowers oneself. And the empowerment of the self by the self is a demonstration of that which is intrinsic. Collective action by empowered selves is an effective strategy for change and represents true empowerment which forms the basis for social action. Use of the term 'Empowerment' is provocative in the context of dominance. The best that can be said for the concept of extrinsic empowerment (empowerment of others) is that it removes the barriers to positive expressions of intrinsic power and creates a climate which enhances self actualization.

Another example of how language is used to divert the dominated away from their intrinsic power is something called 'Political Correctness' which is the language of control and bears little reference to the truth. The behaviour called 'political correctness' is that which avoids controversy. Very often conflicting ideologies spark controversy. It is difficult for those who do not exercise power and those who seek change to refute prevailing ideology without being perceived as subversive and/or insensitive by those who exercise power. When dominant groups, as an exercise of abusive power, dictate that the grief which oppressed people experience must be measured against criteria determined by them (the dominant), then we know that the phrase 'politically correct' is diversionary and often abusive.

Social action is positive action in pursuit of balance, sharing, cooperation and happiness for all humans. Humans suffer pain, know grief and seek happiness. Situations in time or place do not alter the intrinsic power of all humans to act positively on behalf of all humans. ●

Profile

Bernice Blackman



Expectation of Excellence for Every Student

By: Marci Ien

"What drop from head, fall on shoulders."

Much of our inner strength springs from our culture, past and present. As educators of African Heritage, it behooves us to heed the words of both our forbears and our present generation, while we pass the torch of wisdom, one to the other.

Someone wise once said that people are not always what they appear to be. Still, another writer amplified the message by penning the phrase, "You can't judge a book by its cover." I had an encounter recently with a woman who optimised the aforementioned adages. She reminded me how trivial outer appearances are and how sheer energy, determination, and striving for excellence can propel one to unknown heights. Please don't get the wrong idea. Although Bernice Blackman looked exceptional in her designer Magenta suit with jewellery to match, she was no ordinary professional woman. I discovered during the hour I spent with Mrs. Blackman, delving into her educational background, career, and family, that she is nothing short of extraordinary.

A native of Trinidad and Tobago, Bernice attended Mausica Teachers' College where she obtained a Primary/Junior/Intermediate Teacher's Certificate. This four-year program enabled her to teach children from

Kindergarten to Grade 10 in any subject. Mrs. Blackman taught in Trinidad for three years before moving to Canada where she attended the School of Social Work, Laurentian University. Bernice was wooed into education, however, when she discovered her interest in Socio-Linguistics. It was then that Bernice Blackman moved to Toronto to obtain an Honours B.A. in Linguistics at York University. Then came an M. Ed. Degree from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Mrs. Blackman's experience in education spans several school boards. She has worked as a Community Outreach Specialist in East York. Bernice especially enjoyed this position because it allowed her to liaise with different communities, as well as educate parents about the school system and how it functions. For the next five years, Bernice taught ESL, ESD, math and science at Westview Centennial Secondary School. As head of Literacy at Yorkdale Secondary School, Bernice Blackman acted as a resource for teaching staff. Her job was to provide professional development for teachers in all subject areas. From 1987-1989 she served as Consultant, Equity in the Curriculum for the North York Board. Mrs. Blackman made a significant contribution to the Role of the Reader project. She worked to ensure that race, gender and religion would not be barriers to the achievement of students and educators. In 1989, she returned to Westview as a Vice-Principal. Mrs. Blackman left two years later for Don Mills Secondary School where she was a Vice-Principal for two and a half years. She was appointed to her present position, Principal of Sir Sanford Fleming Secondary School in February of this year. As the educational leader in her school, she sets the tone of the learning environment. She believes that all students can learn and be successful if the conditions are conducive to learning. Her life-long commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of others is evident when she speaks enthusiastically about the individual development and growth of staff as well as students.

Bernice Blackman has had a distinguished career, but she is still not satisfied. Her

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Profile

Daphne Changoo



By: Doreen Cornelius

Daphne Changoo is a relative newcomer to the North York Board of Education. She was born in Curacao, but lived and worked as a teacher since 1966 in Guyana, Barbados, St. Lucia and Jamaica. She truly is a product of the Caribbean!

In this country, she taught and was Head of the Mathematics Department at Crawford Adventist Academy for 10 years before coming to the North York Board of Education four years ago as Assistant Head of Mathematics at Bathurst Heights S. S. A year later, she moved to Westview Centennial Secondary School as the major head of Mathematics and

has recently been promoted to Vice-Principal at that school.

Daphne is energetic, enthusiastic and unflagging in her support of student success. As an educator, she believes that she is in the arena where true revolution takes place, because it is through education that students are empowered "to think clearly, act wisely and feel deeply." Education is the key to the liberation of the intellect and soul and the pathway to social mobility.

As Vice-Chair of the African Heritage Educators' Network three years ago, Daphne worked effectively with other educators to influence the level of success of Black students. Guided by the belief that parental involvement in the education of their children is crucial to their success, that "informed and involved parents become the primary guiding agents in their children's education and career development." Daphne played a leading role in helping to develop and implement Project '90, and was quite active in planning and delivering workshops to parents. Daphne reminds us of a school principal's admonition to teachers in Haim Ginnot's Teacher and Child: "Help your students to become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing, arithmetic are only useful if they serve to make our children more humane."

Our thanks to Daphne for her active support of AHEN initiatives and our sincere best wishes for her continued success as a leader in the North York school system. ●

Bernice Blackman, continued

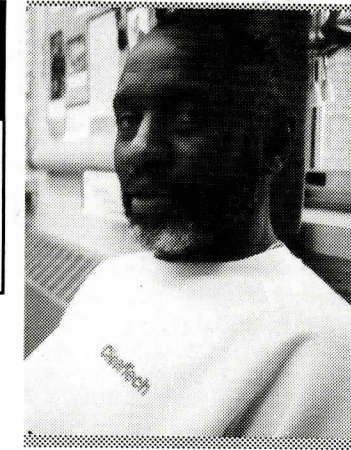
ultimate goal is "to have an impact on the educational system in a wider way." Mrs. Blackman is already doing this. She mentors a group of female students and is a guest lecturer at York University and the University of Toronto. She says her mother is her mentor. One of the original members of Dr. Eric Williams' Status of Women Committee in Trinidad, Bernice's mother was a fervent advocate of community development and education. She strove to excellence, as does her daughter. Mediocrity is taboo in Bernice Blackman's vocabulary. She takes it upon herself to "help her students determine what is excellent" and "to never settle for less."

Bernice has been married for 17 1/2 years to a mediator for the Ministry of Labour and has two daughters. Her sixteen year old wants to specialize in International Law. The younger daughter already knows she wants to be a Principal at the ripe old age of seven. Judging from this articulate, strong-willed, and extremely able woman, their mother, I am confident these children will realize their dreams.

Mrs. Blackman's achievements as educator, mother and spouse serve not only as a validation of our cultural past but also as an inspiration to future generations of young people. ●

Profile

Selwyn Rouse Parent-Tutor



By: Joseph Rouse

When asked in 1990 if he would volunteer in a tutorial programme on Saturday mornings, he did not hesitate to say "yes." When given more details about the programme and its objectives he agreed that it was needed.

Selwyn Rouse is one of the first parent-tutors in Project '90. A father of a daughter completing her third year at university and a teenage son in high school, he can be described as a successful parent. His children's success is an indication that he has the knowledge and experience to assist the children in the programme.

A native of Trinidad and Tobago, he worked for three years in the oil industry. A graduate of the University of Toronto and the Toronto Institute of Medical Technology, he has held various positions in the field of Health Care in hospitals and industry. Presently employed as a Formulation Chemist with a major pharmaceutical company, developing and improving

consumer and prescription products, Selwyn is acutely aware of the skills and attitudes that are presently required to satisfy the demands of the workplace.

This year Selwyn Rouse has tutored grade 9 students in Math, English, Life Skills and African Heritage. He believes that children of African Heritage should know about the history of their ancestors and their accomplishments.

He was introduced to Project '90 in its embryonic stages: initial curiosity was replaced by the recognition that the students who had enrolled in the program had specific needs which had to be addressed. His first day as a volunteer tutor left an indelible impression on his mind. To him it was evident that large numbers of students were attending school and were not being "schooled." Academically, they have "fallen through the cracks." Whether or not they can be retrieved is the challenge that faces us as

parents, educators, and professionals.

After two years in the program, he is left with the distinct impression that many parents have left the education of their children totally in the hands of the school system. This is a mistake of major proportions. Parents must recognize that they have to create the environment for their children to aspire to success. He believes that strategies have to be devised to involve those parents who have been delinquent in their responsibility.

The objective of Project '90 is to fulfil some students' needs. Any obstacles must be overcome. The long term benefits make it necessary to continue this programme. The continuing challenge is to provide resources to assist those who have made the commitment to assist our youth in striving toward a bright future. ●

Profile

Rosalind Smith Tutor

By: Arlene Campbell

What are some qualities
of a volunteer tutor?

RESOURCEFUL
OPTIMISTIC
SINCERE
ALTRUISTIC
LOGICAL
INTELLIGENT
NATURAL
DYNAMIC!!



This is the acronym that describes Rosalind.

Rosalind Smith (fondly known as Roz) is an energetic, young woman who has devoted her Saturdays to Project '90 as a volunteer tutor since its inception. As a grade 3/4 tutor, Rosalind delights in finding innovative ways to captivate her young audience by introducing science and math concepts. Rosalind recognized that through the support and encouragement of others she was better able to succeed. "Now I am in a position to provide a role presence and expose our youth to the many challenges and opportunities that beckon them."

And Rosalind lives by that motto! To that extent, in her community outreach activities, she enlightens students of the myriad contributions of African people in the sciences. Rosalind is also Director of B-PRO (Black Professionals Reaching Out), a voluntary organization dedicated to enhancing the academic performance of youth of African Heritage and advising educators and administrators on strategies to further these

objectives. Rosalind also acts as a mentor with "Each One Teach One" to assist youth interested in pursuing careers in Health Care.

Rosalind is one of the few Black female Hospital Administrators in Ontario and is affiliated with the Canadian College of Health Executives.

Most recently, Rosalind has assumed the position of District Manager in her division. She works closely with 40 hospitals in central west Ontario and supervises a team of professional consultants.

Rosalind's origins point to "La Belle Province." As a native Montrealer, she is fluent in French. Her family support has been a continued source of strength.

In school, Rosalind states that science was always one of her better subjects. Even now, Rosalind continues to be fascinated by the developments in math and physics, in particular. She obtained a B. Sc. in microbiology at Concordia University, Montreal where she was a research assistant and co-authored articles published in scientific journals. Her interest in hospital administration led her to pursue graduate studies in Health Science at the University of Toronto, where she obtained her Master's degree.

Rosalind maintains that "Black youth must avail themselves of the opportunity to pursue studies and excel in the burgeoning world of science. The 21st century beckons our youth to respond to its challenges. Not only is it a lot of fun and relevant to everyday experiences, but also presents countless career opportunities."

In spite of her hectic schedule, Rosalind finds time to play tennis, ski, travel to the Caribbean to explore her familial "roots," write scripts for a radio network and enjoy life!

Focus is pleased to celebrate Rosalind Smith! ●

PROJECT '90 PROVIDES ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

THE PROGRESS OF PROJECT '90
1990-1993

By: Joseph Rouse

Project '90 is a tutorial programme for students of African Heritage initiated by the African Heritage Educators' Network. It started in the fall of 1990 to provide academic support to students of African Heritage. It also included information classes for parents to familiarise them with the school system their children attend. Teachers and other

every Saturday morning. Students in Grades 3 to 9 are tutored in mathematics, English, Life Skills and African History.

The programme for parents focusses on familiarizing them with the Canadian educational system in general, and the North York Board of Education in particular.

Parents are given information about the organizational structure of the system, the function of the different departments within the system and the school curriculum. Project '90 provides information about evaluation techniques and policies related to homework, class work, tests and class projects. Parents have found the information discussed in the Saturday programme



community volunteers tutor at these classes which are conducted on Saturday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon at Northview Heights Secondary School.

Project '90 was initiated by the African Heritage Educators' Network because of concerns of parents and teachers about the lack of success among many students of African Heritage. It was believed that a tutorial programme that complemented the work that these children did in day school would improve their chances of success. The programme continues to be one that is needed as demonstrated by the continuing enrolment over the past two years. At present there are approximately 110 students who attend classes

to be very helpful when they determine with educators, appropriate school programmes for their children. With such information, parents are able to make informed decisions concerning their children's education.

The programme also stresses the importance of the partnership of parents, teachers and pupils as an important component in enhancing their children's success.

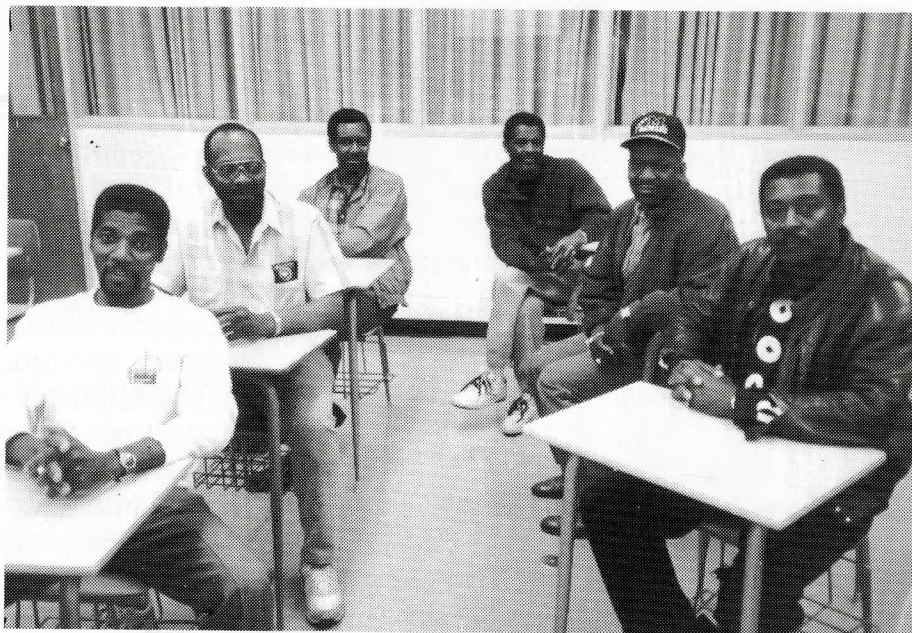
Videos, lectures and discussions on effective parenting are also included as part of the adult programme.

In order to meet the continuing needs of students in the programme, standardized

continued next page

PROJECT '90, continued

testing in Mathematics and English was administered to all students early in the 1992-1993 academic year. The results of these tests were interpreted to the tutors who use the information to address those areas of strengths and weaknesses demonstrated in the tests. Students will be tested again in order to measure their progress, and as well the information obtained will enable tutors to revisit course outlines and teaching



approaches in order to facilitate successful student outcomes. As well as helping students to improve their basic skills in these two subject areas, students also receive assistance with some of the subjects they pursue in their regular school programme.

The success of Project '90 has placed unexpectedly high demands on volunteers. As a result of these demands, an organizational structure was designed at the start of this academic year in order to distribute the various responsibilities that have arisen. These responsibilities include, providing teaching materials for tutors, keeping attendance records of students, phoning the homes of students who are absent and keeping records of tutors present and the work completed at the end of each Saturday.

The demand of the tutoring programme has also made it necessary to institute an enrolment procedure. This procedure requires that parents accompany their children at the time of enrolment. This procedure is in keeping with Project '90's philosophy – that, parents who are intimately involved in their children's education increase the chances for their success in school. The procedure also gives the Project facilitators the opportunity to

invite parents to participate in the programme in a variety of ways.

The African Heritage Educators' Network through Project '90 and in association with the North York Board Race and Ethnic Relations Department contributed to African Heritage Month. In February a Demonstration/Activity Day was



held at Northview Heights Secondary School. It consisted of seven different exhibits and workshops - arts and crafts, dance, painting, pottery, steelband, storytelling and weaving. Approximately one hundred and eighty students, parents and community volunteers attended and had opportunities to demonstrate their skills at the various workshops. The

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Ms. Thuthu Kile Bhengu at Project '90

By: Joyce Craig

Thuthu Kile Bhengu, Principal of Phambili School in Durham, South Africa visited the North York Board of Education and was a guest speaker at Project '90 on Saturday, March 6, 1993.

Ms. Bhengu spoke to a rapt audience of students, teachers and parents. She shared with us some of the experiences which many South Africans students

must deal with on a day-to-day basis as they struggle to obtain an education. These students see the attainment of a good education as a path which can lead to fulfilling and satisfying lives.

The last half of her address was made specifically to the students who were encouraged to ask questions, and questions they asked, as many of them were having their very first opportunity to

speaking with a Black, South African woman Principal.

Before closing, Ms. Bhengu implored the students to respect their parents, pay attention to their school work, continue to be curious about the world around them, and fearlessly strive to be the determinants of their destiny.

Thank you Thuthu, and good luck in the struggle.

PROJECT '90, continued

programme began with a welcome address by Vernon Farrell, Chair of AHEN, who introduced Trustee Stephanie Payne who also addressed the students. Numerous members of the African Heritage Educators Network and Project '90, Janet Williams, Joyce Craig, Elizabeth St. Clair, Patricia Hayes, Arlene Campbell, Leolyn Hendriks, Alvon Noel and Joseph Rouse among others, were responsible for the success of this event.

Project '90 continues to address an educational need that exists in the community it serves. It is the hope that programmes like this will assist students to be more successful in school. It is also our hope that parents and community volunteers will continue to contribute their time and energy to Project '90. Project '90 also salutes its many volunteers who have assumed various responsibilities and thereby continue

to contribute to its success and the success of our children.

We pay tribute to a young generation of tutors whose vitality and mission ensure the continuity and quality in the life of Project '90. Anya Martin, Caroline Embden, Camille Logan, Steve Shepherd, Pauline Shepherd, Sandra Cunningham, Dominick Shelton, Andrea Andrews, Dorette Shepherd, Nadia Vaughan, and Everton Lewis. We thank you.

We also pay tribute to parent-tutors whose experience, expertise, dedication and insights continue to provide more stability, discipline and encouragement to Project '90: Keith Worrell, Selwyn Rouse, Fitz Tonge, Adina James and Valerie Carasco. We thank you. Let's all continue to work together. Together we can all win. ●

A TIMELESS MESSAGE FOR OUR YOUTH

By: George A. Cornelius

Principal, Earl Haig Secondary School

For every choice we make, we're choosing from many options. Anyone who chooses to make the best of learning opportunities during their school years will have an advantage later on in the race for a successful and productive life.

You may think you do not possess the natural academic ability to achieve top marks in school, but that is no excuse for dropping out of the race. You must set high expectations for yourself. You need to know what skills you have and how to use them effectively. You must do the best you can with what talent you have, and work hard at focusing all your energy in acquiring the best education possible.

In the long run, education is your ticket to prosperity. Do not waste your energies on complaining about the barriers to success. Attack these barriers by developing a variety of strategies for success. These strategies must include a focus as well as concentration and determination to succeed.

Hard work can lead to success. Success, in turn, can bring happiness and a sense of satisfaction that is immeasurable. The only way to success is to work at it with all of your resources.

By the way, NO ONE can do it for you, YOU must do it for yourself - NOW.

The message remains the same. It is as relevant today as it was yesterday, and will be tomorrow.

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